

Access and Equity Policy

POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out the principles for providing inclusive and equitable access to education for all UTS College students, in this way enhancing their learning experience.
- Outline the ways in which UTS College promotes equal opportunities, accommodates diversity and creates equivalent opportunities for academic success regardless of students' backgrounds.
- Ensure that UTS College students with a disability, learning need or health issue can access and participate in their education on the same basis as other students.
- Enrich the accessibility and inclusiveness of enrolment, learning and assessment practices.
- Make sure UTS College complies with the following legislation requirements:
 - The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
 - The Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006, as well as the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (and the 2015 review)
 - Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)
 - National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Commonwealth 2018)
 - Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021: 2.2 Equity and Diversity; and 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety
 - Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency Act (Commonwealth, 2011)

SCOPE

The policy applies to:

- All staff who play a role at any stage of the student life cycle, onshore or offshore.
- All students applying to or enrolled at UTS College.
- All aspects of UTS College's learning environment.

DEFINITIONS are set out at the end of this policy.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Principle
<p>1.Uphold principles of equity for all students and create opportunities for diverse student groups to access and succeed in their higher education studies.</p> <p>1.1 Respect and appreciate diversity as contributing to the richness of the learning and teaching environment.</p> <p>1.2 In order to ensure equal opportunities, reasonable adjustment(s) may be required to improve educational opportunities for people from group including: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and students with disability, students who have experienced family and domestic violence, students who have experienced aggravated or sexual assault, students with carer responsibilities, and students who have experienced traumatic events.</p> <p>1.3 In partnership with UTS Jumbunna and UTS Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion, UTS college offers a number of full-fee scholarships to Indigenous students and asylum seekers. Indigenous students can apply for a UTS College Indigenous Students’ Jumbunna Pathway Scholarship by applying to UTS through the Jumbunna Pathways Program. Asylum seekers can apply UTS College Humanitarian Pathway Scholarship by applying to UTS through UTS Humanitarian Scholarship.</p>
<p>2. Provide an inclusive and flexible environment, including the implementation of reasonable adjustments when required to achieve the best outcomes for the varied needs of students.</p> <p>2.1 Admission and enrolment procedures are non-discriminatory, and orientation and preparation programs (Welcome sessions) are accessible and inclusive in design and application.</p> <p>2.2 Curricula and programs are designed to be inclusive, flexible, and accessible, so they meet the needs of students with a wide range of abilities, learning styles, and preferences.</p> <p>2.3 Where practical, potential barriers to access or participation are removed or reduced systemically to minimise the need for students to seek adjustments.</p> <p>2.4 Where practical, learning activities and resources are made available in accessible formats and offer multiple means of representation (to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge); action, and expression (to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know); and action and engagement (to stimulate learners’ interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation).</p> <p>2.5 UTS College teaching strategies are adjusted to meet the learning needs of the student and address any disadvantages in the student’s learning resulting from his or her disability (e.g., the provision of additional support).</p>

Principle

2.6 The UTS College digital environment is perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust, in line with the standards set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.

3. Encourage all students to participate in the educational decision-making process, including by disclosing a disability, learning need or health issue that could affect their access to education on the same basis as other students.

3.1 Students with access requirements and/or disabilities are invited to disclose this information to UTS College at the time of application to the College, or as soon as they are aware of them.

3.2 Students who choose not to disclose their access requirements and/or disabilities to UTS College may not receive individual adjustments or support.

4. Provide appropriate information about educational access and equity to all prospective and enrolled students.

4.1 Information about educational access and equity is available on the UTS College website, application form, at Welcome Week activities, on Canvas and in the Education Access Inclusion Guide.

4.2 UTS College publications, information, and forms use inclusive language and are made accessible to students with accessibility issues.

4.3 Staff responding to inquiries from prospective students are aware of services for students with a disability and the information provided is consistent, accurate, and useful.

4.4 Staff are supported to meet the needs of students with disabilities through orientation programs, professional development programs, and the UTS College Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct.

5 Determine, document, and act on any reasonable adjustments that UTS College considers appropriate, in consultation with the student and in a timely manner.

5.1 UTS College will follow up with any student who discloses access requirements and/or disabilities to ensure they know how to apply to have their access and inclusion requirements recognised and acted on.

5.2 Once an application is received, UTS College will decide what adjustments are reasonable and appropriate by considering: the information provided by the student, any adjustments recommended by their health professional, their effect on the student, staff, and other students, as well as the inherent requirements of the course and the implications for UTS College, including financial and other costs.

5.3 UTS College will document its decisions on the reasonable adjustments in an Individual Education Access and Inclusion Plan.

Principle
5.4 UTS College will act on any documented reasonable adjustments as soon as practical.
5.5 Provision of reasonable adjustment does not guarantee success in studies.
6. Reserve the right to decline the provision of adjustments in limited circumstances only.
6.1 UTS College is not required to provide adjustments to meet a student’s access and inclusion requirements if doing so would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the College.
6.2 UTS College is not required to provide adjustments to meet a student’s access and inclusion requirements if doing so would endanger the health or welfare of the student or other people.
6.3 Reserve the right to terminate the student’s enrolment when a student’s needs for special accommodation exceeds those that were agreed and cannot be reasonably accommodated by UTS College.
7. Maintain student privacy, in accordance with the UTS College Privacy Policy.
7.1 Students are under no obligation to inform UTS College of their access and inclusion requirements and/or disability unless they represent a health risk to students or staff.
7.2 UTS College will protect the personal information it collects and receives from students and the privacy of those students, in accordance with its Privacy Policy.
8. Build and promote a culture of equity for students with disability and other varied needs which respects and values their diverse abilities, needs, and circumstances as well as their contributions to the culture, and which actively opposes discrimination and harassment, whether it is overt or covert.
8.1 Policies and codes of conduct explicitly prohibit discrimination, harassment and victimisation of students with disabilities and strategies are in place to prevent these behaviours.
8.2 Staff and students are informed about the obligation not to harass or victimize students with a disability or their associates; the appropriate action to be taken if harassment or victimisation occurs.
8.3 Grievance procedures are resolved fairly and in a timely manner with all grievances arising directly or indirectly from a student’s disability.
8.4 Student have the right to raise complaints in good faith under the relevant UTS College complaints and appeal policy without fear of retaliation or victimisation.

DEFINITIONS

Access and inclusion requirements	<p>Conditions (not necessarily provided within UTS College standard learning environment) that a student needs in order to fairly access, and be fully incorporated in the College learning environment. The nature of these requirements depends on the individual student's disability, learning need or health issue, and circumstances. For example, access requirements may be related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campus access ▪ Assessments ▪ Learning resources ▪ Physical environments such as a lecture room
Accessible	<p>Able to be obtained or used by a wide range of people with differing abilities, needs and circumstances. For example, learning materials are accessible if they can be perceived by students with differing sensory abilities – such as videos with closed captions, printed materials with large font size, visual images with alternative text and so on.</p>
Barriers	<p>Elements of the learning environment that may limit or prevent a student having equit access to learning. For example, they may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning and teaching resources that are not perceivable to students with visual or hearing impairments. ▪ Learning spaces that cannot be easily accessed or used by students with mod impairments. ▪ Assessment methods that disadvantage students with mental health issues.
Digital Environment	<p>In this context, spaces involving or relating to the use of computer technology e.g. the internet.</p>
Disability	<p>Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, disability includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ learning or neurological conditions e.g., dyslexia, ADHD/ADD, autism spectrum disorder. ▪ ongoing medical conditions or illness, e.g., chronic fatigue syndrome, acquired brain injury. ▪ mental health conditions, e.g. anxiety and depression ▪ vision, hearing, and physical impairments.
Discrimination	<p>In this context, behaving or proposing to behave towards someone unfavourably on the basis of a disability. For example, staff stereotyping a potential student with a disability as unsuitable for study at UTS College without the decision having any foundation in fact or knowledge of the potentialities or limits of the condition.</p>
Equitable	<p>In this context, all students can participate in learning environments on the same basis. For example, students with a hearing impairment are provided with captions on videos.</p>
Flexible	<p>In this context, providing more than one way to achieve the same learning outcome. For example, students might be able to use various media and modes in their learning in the preparation and submission of assessments.</p>

Harassment (harass, v.)	Behaviour that disturbs or upsets is typically repetitive and may be threatening. Foreexample, in this context, regularly calling students by an offensive name because they have a disability.
Inclusive	Creating a learning environment that accepts each individual student's differences, embraces their strengths, and provides opportunities for them to achieve their full potential.
Individual Education Access and Inclusion Plan	A formal document prepared by UTS College to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ record its decisions on the reasonable adjustments that are appropriate to meet an individual student's access and inclusion requirements, and ▪ constitute an agreement with the student that it will provide these adjustments.
Inherent requirements	The skills and knowledge in a program of study that must be completed by students because they are essential to the program. Students can be provided with reasonable adjustments, but inherent requirements must be maintained.
Humanitarian Scholarship	The UTS Humanitarian Scholarship has been established to support undergraduate study for students holding Asylum Seeker Bridging Visas or Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) as a result of their arrival to Australia as asylum seekers. This is a whole of UTS College commitment, providing scholarships across all Diploma programs, to asylum seekers unable to access Commonwealth Supported places or government loan schemes.
Jumbunna Scholarship	The UTS Jumbunna Pathways Program into University is open to recent-school leavers (with or without an ATAR); non-school leavers; people with TAFE, College or previous University qualifications. The Jumbunna Pathways Program offers Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students an opportunity to enter higher education based on factors including education, previous life and work experience. This is a whole of UTS College commitment, providing scholarships across all Diploma programs, to Jumbunna Scholarship students.
Learning Environment	Covers all factors that contribute to students' learning experiences, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attitudes and values embedded in the curriculum and teaching practices. ▪ Learning spaces, including their size, arrangement, and lighting ▪ Learning resources and teaching aids (e.g., handouts, slides, videos) ▪ Assessment methods and timeframes ▪ Technologies and equipment ▪ Student services and facilities (e.g., lift access).
On the same basis	Opportunities and choices comparable to those offered to students without disabilities. For example, if there was a student in a wheelchair in the class, when going on an excursion, the organising teacher would check that the site was accessible.
Operable	In digital environments, students must be able to interact with the website or other online platforms. For example, teachers would give students enough time to read and use content.

Perceivable	In digital environments, students must be able to understand the information being presented. For example, providing text alternatives for any non-text content (such as braille, or speech).
Reasonable adjustment	<p>The modification of a learning environment, learning resources, or facilities to remove barriers and enable students to access learning and participate in a program of study. Reasonable adjustments may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special exam conditions ▪ Modification to assessment deadlines ▪ Use of alternative assessments ▪ Use of assistive resources and/or technologies ▪ Adapted course materials. <p>Reasonable adjustment is distinct from "Special Consideration", which is available to any student who has been affected by a short-term event.</p>
Robust	In digital environments, students with a wide variety of assistive technologies must be able to use the website and other online platforms now, and in the future, as technologies evolve.
Staff	People employed to work on an ongoing, fixed term, sessional or casual basis under the terms and conditions of an employment agreement (contract) issued by UTS College.
Understandable	In digital environments, the content or operation of the website cannot be beyond the understanding of the student. For example, all web pages should appear and work in predictable ways.
UTS College	UTS College Limited, its representative offices and its controlled entities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Assessment Policy
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (and the 2015 review)
- Education Access and Inclusion Guide
- Education Access and Inclusion Reasonable Adjustment Procedure
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021: 2.2 Equity and Diversity; and 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Individual Access and Inclusion Plan
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Commonwealth 2018)
- Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency Act (Commonwealth, 2011)

- UTS College Privacy Policy
- UTS College (Student) Sexual Assault and Harassment Policy
- UTS College Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct
- UTS College Humanitarian Scholarship Administration Procedure
- UTS College Jumbunna Scholarship Administration Procedure
- Student Complaints and Appeals Policy
- UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

ADMIN USE ONLY

APPROVAL		
Position title:	Chair of the Academic Board	Date: 22 February 2024
Policy Title	Access and Equity Policy	
Executive	Dean of Studies	
Manager	Student Services Manager	
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VERSION HISTORY

No.	Author	Description of change/purpose	Date
1.0	Zoe Wang	New to replace Education Access and Inclusion Policy	Feb 2024
1.1			